

THE BUNGLER

BY JAMES M. SPENDER.

(Continued from last week.)

The old man's eyes fell on a heap of rich specimens sorted to one side. He picked up one of them, and the muscles along his jaw grew suddenly taut. His strained breath whistling between his teeth turned Bill about with a start. He saw the bit of rich metal in the other's hand, and the line of fire flashing across his eyes.

"Gosh, Tom," he probed unconsciously, "if yu an' me could only stumble onto some dope like that!"

"Yes, if we only could."

The glamour, the golden mist thrown about Jack and his operations drew Bill back to the spot from day to day. But the old man came no more. He took to long rambles up the creek, aimless excursions which took him everywhere, nowhere. A gnawing fever was at work in his face, and when night came on he sat withdrawn in the shadows beyond the camp-fire, a heavy gloom upon him.

At their breakfast one morning the two saw Jack drive his pack-burros up the side of the gulch toward his claim. With an abrupt show of interest, the old man set down his coffee and came to his feet. He stood for a moment with his eyes on the burros, then turned on Bill.

"Bill," he choked hoarsely, "blamed if this hain't gone fur enough! He don't get outen this gulch with that ore. Not on yer life! It's not his'n!"

"Not his'n," said Bill. "What yu drivin' at?"

But the old man had snatched up his hat and turned up the side of the gulch. Bill followed, panting to keep at his heels.

Jack was lashing on the third sack of ore. "She's pinched out on me, fellers," he began. "Mighty snug pocket, though, fur's she's went. I've—"

The words withered on his lips. He dropped his pack ropes and reached for a drill. Bill, struggling for his wind, came up just then and laid a hand on the old man's shoulders. He shook himself loose, but Bill grabbed him again, now by the collar. Twisting and sawing, gasping under the tightening hold, he turned on Bill with seething fury.

"Leggo! Yu blamed rat!" he snarled. "Leggo! or I'll brain yu."

The furious spurt of the old man's energy was soon spent. His heated cries wavered, lapsed into a gurgling mumble. His breath faltered, sobbed in and out in fitful gasps, and he crumpled on the ground, Bill astride of his chest.

"It's not his'n!" he insisted, with rattling intonation. "Not his'n! It's not his'n!"

Then he lay back quite motionless, and a heavy film came between him and Bill. But the weight was still on his chest, and he thought he could hear Bill's voice, hollow and deadened, coming to him from far off.

"Guess he must 've gone dippy, Jack. You hustle with yer packin' and pull yer freight. I'll hang onto him till yer gone."

The old man sat up and looked at the dust on his shirt, the rent in his trousers. He shook a bit of rock from his ear and reached for his hat. Then his eye fell on Bill lounging to one side.

"Gone, has he, Bill?"

"Well, yes."

He caught the anxious look in Bill's eyes, and set him at rest. "Oh, yu needn't worry, Bill; I ain't goin' to make no more breaks. My dippy spell is over now."

A few mornings later the two parted. This time it was the old man who turned down the mountain-side.

"No, Bill," he said, "I'm done with the trail. I'm gettin' too old fer the game. Good luck to yu, Bill!"

A little way down the trail he hesitated a moment, then came back to the tent.

"I—I just wanted to tell yu, Bill," he explained, through the flush of his confusion, "that yu was right when yu

claimed I'd bungled things from the start. I—I'm a bungler, just a natural bungler, like yu said I was, Bill."

Then he was gone.

Bill hung on at the gulch for a month, prospecting every foot of its stony bed, the hills and cliffs above. He came upon no lead, no pocket. But one day he found a bleached slab of pine protruding from a clump of brush just below Jack's abandoned hole. It was a location stake. The penciled lines had faded, but he laboriously spelled out the words at the head of the stake: "The Billy Boy Lode."

And at the bottom of the stake, in a scrawl that was familiar, he made out his own name, his and that of the old man.

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this fall, be sure you
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WHERE THE GRADUATES GO.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE OF UTAH,
Logan, Utah.

September 15, 1919.

Editor, Goodwin's Weekly,

Salt Lake City, Utah.

Dear Wielder of the Vigorous Pen:

You are absolutely right in what you say in your last issue of the Weekly. The agricultural millennium will be near at hand when the agricultural colleges and rural schools can send their graduates directly back to the land. That time will come, but only, of course, by degrees. Just now, in spite of all we can do, the cause calls for leadership. The boys trained to go back to the farm, are whipped into service to be centers of inspiration in high schools, among bodies of farmers, in the experimental stations, and in the Government service. It is but natural that we should have this leadership, otherwise, how should we reach the masses of the people for whose good we are carrying to all of the nations, in all the channels, on the highways and the byways, the good gospel of a more intelligent, a happier and a more profitable life for all who toil in the midst of the necessary work of the world?

You are right. The vision of the end is of a time when these men, trained in the

colleges will go back directly to the farm. Even now, many do go back, and all, I am happy to say, are associated in some direct manner with the work of advancing agriculture.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

JOHN A. WIDTSOE,

President.

UTAH'S BEST DRY GOODS STORE.

It has been officially announced that "The Paris" is the only store in the entire state of Utah that imports millinery direct, which has doubtless had much to do with the ever increasing popularity of, and patronage accorded this well known establishment. It has always been conceded by particular and discriminating women in and about Salt Lake that nowhere in the city outside "The Paris" are such superior styles and such exceptional values in millinery and garments to be had.

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The Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company

